

## A. Background

**BLM Office:** Arctic Field Office LLAKF01000

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.** FF093060

**Applicant:** Macgill Adams  
DBA Wilderness Alaska  
P.O. Box 113063  
Anchorage, Alaska 99511

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Special Recreation Permit

**Dates of Proposed Activity:** June 8 – September 2, 2015

**General Location of Proposed Action:** Nigu River, Ipnarik River, Colville River, & Etivluk River

**Description of Proposed Action:** The applicant, Mr. Macgill Adams with Wilderness Alaska ([www.wildernessalaska.com](http://www.wildernessalaska.com)) is requesting a 1-year renewal of his Special Recreation Permit (SRP). Wilderness Alaska is proposing to conduct three commercial recreational trips in the NPR-A in 2015. The first trip would occur on the Ipnarik River from June 8-17 with six guests and two guides. Planned activities include river running, wildlife viewing, photography, day hiking and overnight camping. This will be the first trip on this river for Wilderness Alaska. Mr. Adams has contracted with Coyote Air to fly the group to the river. The expected landing site would be a gravel bar on the river, 68° 19'N 157° 21' W, but the actual landing spot will depend on the water level of the river. The take out point would be on the Colville River near the Etivluk, 68° 56.4'N 155° 54.5' W, but also depends on the water level of the river.

The second trip would include river rafting on the Utukok River from June 17-26. The trip would include six guests and two guides. Proposed activities are river running, day hiking, wildlife viewing, photography, and overnight camping. The expected landing site would be a gravel bar on the river, 68° 52.044'N 161° 09.816' W. The expected take out point would be 69° 21.922'N 159° 54.916' W.

Currently Mr. Adams does not have clients signed up for the third trip. If he has clients, the trip would include river rafting on the Nigu River and Etivluk River to the Colville River from August 24 to September 2. The group size would be similar to the first two trips. This trip would be similar to the trip Mr. Adams conducted last year accessing the area from the Gates of the Arctic National Park and floating into the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) on day 2 of the trip. The expected pick up location would be 68° 56.440' N 155° 54.526' W.

The transportation logistics for all trips would be conducted with fixed wing aircraft and would not utilize helicopters. They would charter Coyote Air Service for all trips. In addition, a Caravan (Wrights Air Service) would be utilized at Iivotuk on June 17 and June 26 to stage guests for shuttles in the Coyote aircraft.

Wilderness Alaska does not plan to use fuel caches and would carry propane (20 # bottle) to fuel their small cook stove. The primary form of recreation they would like to provide to visitors is multi-day river floating trips. They would use inflatable canoes to travel downstream, moving camps regularly but not necessarily every day. On occasion they would stay at the same camp area for more than one night.

Wilderness Alaska will use locking airtight Engel and Yeti coolers. All food containers are certified bear resistant by the IGBC. Food and eating are confined to a particular area/tent located away from sleeping areas. They would have a shotgun and bear spray with them. Mr. Adams cleans their trash as well as possible and stores it in rubbish bags within a sturdy dry bag. All trash would be backhauled to Fairbanks for disposal; recyclable items would be taken to a recycling center in Anchorage. On a rare occasion, burnable waste may be burned, however the applicant does not regularly have fires. When they do, they create pits in the flood zone and line them with sand to protect the rocks from scarring; they do not make fire rings. The applicant would use leave no trace standards for human waste disposal. Water will be obtained from free flowing natural sources and will either be boiled or run through a filter.

Wilderness Alaska has held a BLM permit with the Artic Field Office on and off since 2000. Both Mr. Adams and his employees have completed safety training and have experience in remote Alaska conditions. Trip leaders carry two forms of communication on the trips, an aviation band radio with a list of commonly used frequencies and a satellite phone. Both devices are carried in a pelican box, which includes instructions and additional batteries. This year they are also carrying an Delorme inReach Explorer, a 2-way satellite text messaging device, for emergency use. They also carry a backup GPS unit to aid in specific locating in case of emergency. At the beginning of each trip, there is a safety discussion which touches on land and water protocol and introduces all the resources they are carrying.

### **Legal Description:**

#### **Trip 1- Ipnavik River to Colville River**

<b>Meridian</b>	<b>Township</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>River Section on BLM managed land</b>	<b>River Section not on BLM managed Land.</b>
Kateel	34 North	6 East	7-36	--
Kateel	34 North	7 East	7-36 within NPR-A	Lands outside of NPR-A
Umiat	12 South	23 West	1-30	--
Umiat	11 South	23 West	1-36	--
Umiat	11 South	22 West	1-36	--
Umiat	10 South	23 West	1-36	--
Umiat	10 South	22 West	1-36	--
Umiat	9 South	23 West	1-36	--
Umiat	9 South	22 West	1-36	--
Umiat	8 South	22 West	1-36	--
Umiat	8 South	21 West	1-36	--
Umiat	8 South	20 West	1-36	--
Umiat	8 South	19 West	1-36	--
Umiat	7 South	20 West	1-36	--
Umiat	7 South	19 West	1-36	--
Umiat	6 South	19 West	1-36	--

### Utukok River Trip

Township	Range	River Section on BLM managed land	River Section not on BLM managed Land.
1 South	33 West	5-10, 14-17, 23,25-26, 35-36 (Excluding Private Land)	14, 23, 24 Private Land
2 South	33 West	1-3, 10-11, 14-23, 27	--
2 South	34 West	13-15, 21-24, 27-32	--
2 South	35 West	30-36	--
2 South	36 West	25-27, 33-36	--
3 South	36 West	3-4, 9-10, 15-16, 20-22, 28-33	--
3 South	37 West	33-36	--
4 South	36 West	6	--
4 South	37 West	1-8, 16-21, 29-32	--
5 South	38 West	3-4, 8-9, 16-20, 30	
5 South	39 West	25-26, 32-36	--
6 South	39 West	4-9, 16, 21, 28-29, 32-34 (Excluding Private Land)	8-9 Private Land
7 South	39 West	3-4, 10-14	--

### Nigu/Etivluk River Trip In - National Parkland Out N68° 56.60 N155° 54.87

Meridian	Township	Range	River Section on BLM managed land	River Section not on BLM managed Land.
Kateel	31 North	14 East	None	19,30,31,32
Kateel	31 North	13 East	None	5,6, 8-11,13-15,24
Kateel	32 North	13 East	None	31,32
Kateel	32 North	12 East	2-4,10-14,23-26,36	--
Kateel	33 North	12 East	19,29-33	--
Kateel	33 North	11 East	5,6,8,9,14-17,22-25	--
Kateel	34 North	11 East	7,8, 17-20,29-32	--
Umiat	12 South	19 West	5-8,17-20,29,30	--
Umiat	11 South	19 West	6-8,17-20,29-32	--
Umiat	11 South	20 West	1,12	--
Umiat	10 South	19 West	1,2,10-16,19-23,27-31	--
Umiat	10 South	20 West	36	--
Umiat	9 South	19 West	1,12,13,24,25,35,36	--
Umiat	9 South	18 West	18,19,30,31	--
Umiat	8 South	18 West	2-4,9-11,15-17,19-22,27-33	--
Umiat	7 South	18 West	1-3,10-16,21-23,26-28,32-35	--
Umiat	6 South	18 West	23-27,34-36	--
Umiat	6 South	17 West	17-20	--
			3, 4,5,8,9,10,17 State Selected	--

## Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning documents:

National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2012

Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved 1/11/1991

Utility Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement approved 9/27/1989

The proposed action is also in conformance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act which allows for the authorization of uses consistent with the purposes of the Act.

### B. Compliance with NEPA

The IAP/EIS Record of Decision for the NPR-A developed stipulations and best management practices applicable to all activities in NPR-A. The stipulations and best management practices applicable to the proposed action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant and are entitled: “FF093060 Wilderness Alaska Stipulations 2015” and “United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Commercial Land Based Special Recreation Permit Stipulations.”

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4(F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

**“Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.”**

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		<b>X</b>
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		<b>X</b>
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		<b>X</b>
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		<b>X</b>
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>

2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		<b>X</b>
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		<b>X</b>
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		<b>X</b>
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		<b>X</b>
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		<b>X</b>
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		<b>X</b>

#### **D. Approval and Contact Information**

I considered the proposed action and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

/s/  
 Stacie McIntosh  
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

4/23/2015  
 Date

#### **Contact Person:**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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